

SPECIFICATION

In the specification, please amend the first two paragraphs of page 16, beginning at line 1 as follows:

~~As depicted in Figure 3A, one~~ One optical process for forming a mask in accordance with certain embodiments of this invention employs a sacrificial layer of hard mask material [[303]] and an exposed layer of photoresist [[305]]. These layers are provided directly on top of a planarized surface [[301]] for a patterned layer of conductive features. The hard mask layer [[303]] is formed beneath the photoresist layer [[305]].

~~The~~ As depicted in Figure 3A, the photoresist layer is illuminated with an illumination pattern 307 to produce exposed regions 309. The illumination pattern 307 is in turn created by an optical element 311 that may be an interference element such as a diffraction grating or holographic element. Optical element 311 receives light radiation $313 (\lambda)$ from an arbitrary source to produce illumination pattern 307. While optical element 311 is depicted as a transmission based element, it could as well be a reflective element. Optical techniques employing diffraction gratings or holographic lithography typically produce a non-random arrangement of columnar regions 361 as depicted in the device top view shown in Figure 3C.

SPECIFICATION

In the specification, please amend the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 25 as follows:

The relationship between the defined line width of a fabrication technology and the feature dimensions of the columnar regions is relevant to this invention. Generally, the feature dimensions will be substantially smaller than the defined line width. For example, columnar gaps may have an average feature dimension that is not greater than about 0.4 times the defined line width.